

Community members participate in a die-in organized by MIT Coalition Against Apartheid in protest of the Palestinian-Israel conflict, Monday, October 30.

THE TECH

Moungi Bawendi speaks about approaching challenges, mentoring trainees, and the developing field of quantum dots

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MIT Divest turns David Koch's portrait into a grim reaper on Halloween, bringing attention to his role in climate change misinformation, Tuesday, October 31.

IN SHORT

Nov. 2 is the day of the Angelika Amon Young Scientist Award
Presentations and Reception at the Koch Institute.

Nov. 3 is the last day to add half-term subjects offered in the second half of term.

EECS's DEI Programming will host a town hall Nov. 6 focusing on college admissions and EECS admissions following the recent Supreme Court decision.

Nov. 11 is Veterans Day. No classes on Friday, Nov. 10!

SMARTPHONES AND CIGARETTES

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MIT'S JEWISH COMMUNITY

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DRONE DELIVERIES

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LIGO'S QUANTUM

LIMIT

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FAMILY WEEKEND

CONCERT

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BRIEF TENDER LIGHT

ARTS, p. 9



A WEBCOMIC OF ROMANCE, SARCASM, MATH, AND LANGUAGE
by Randall Munroe

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Students voice thoughts on recommended housing rate changes at Dormcon meeting

The proposed pricing system would set the flat rate at the price of a tier-2 single

By Srinidhi Narayanan and
Jayashabari Shankar

Students expressed concerns regarding proposed changes to MIT's housing rates at a Dormcon general body meeting (GBM) Oct. 26. The meeting was attended by two members of MIT Housing and Residential Services (HRS), Dormcon representatives, and students.

The discussion focused on the potential implications of a proposal to create a unified pricing system for all dorm rooms, regardless of dorm amenities or room type. HRS stated that the rationale for this was to create a more equitable housing environment for all students.

The proposed unified pricing system would set the flat rate at the price of a tier-2 single, resulting in a net price increase for tier-3 dorm residents — affecting those living in Random Hall and in Next House doubles or triples. Senior Associate Dean of Housing and Residential Services David Friedrich said that "our closest peers that have the same commitment to [need blind financial aid] have a housing system that is one price." He noted that issues of equity "were complicated."

Student attendants at the GBM

were engaged, asking Friedrich several questions about the proposal. A common thread repeated throughout the meeting was some low-income students' concern that the flat rate would strip them of the benefits that opting into tier-3 housing provided: students explained that "a lot of low income students choose lower housing options to get back money to send home. Some students are willing to make that sacrifice."

Another student added that they didn't "see why raising the prices is helping because it's removing the option for [them] to choose a cheaper house so that [they] can work less [to support themselves]."

Students expounded on potential consequences related to this point, with one stating that "this could incentivize a lot of students who are low income to consider cheaper off campus housing options... you've punted low income students into independent living groups and off campus apartments that are going to be more removed from campus given transportation."

The differences in amenities among dorms led some at the meeting to raise questions about the fairness of a uniform pricing

system. Friedrich shared that HRS is working on this issue: "we're trying to level the playing field where there isn't too much variation, [but] there will be a bit." Some students felt that it would be best to wait until ongoing dorm renovations were completed, allowing for a fair assessment of the housing options available to students.

The meeting concluded with an encouragement for students to continue providing input through various surveys and forms. Students are encouraged to reach out to dormcon-housing-chair@mit.edu for any further questions, and attend the bimonthly meetings with Housing Representatives. Students were also encouraged to contact Friedrich directly with questions or concerns.

The Tech plans to continue reporting on this issue in the coming weeks. To that end, students who feel strongly about this issue in any capacity can reach out to share their thoughts. Quotes and GBM summaries were taken from the Dormcon official meeting notes, which can be found at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KJWagmLDnTuzVuPiiQ1FSp-o5CFxwjkw2vtldcE98/>.

MIT net assets drop for the second consecutive year

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SPORTS BLITZ

Friday, October 20th:

- Women's Volleyball defeated Williams College 3-0

Saturday, October 21st:

- Men's Water Polo defeated Washington and Jefferson College 22-7
- Women's Lightweight Collegiate 2x: 15th of 18 at Head of the Charles
- Women's Openweight Crew Club 4: 6th of 51; Club 8 "A": 18th of 40; Club 8 "B": 9th of 40 at Head of the Charles
- Men's Lightweight Club 8+: 13th of 35 at Head of the Charles
- Men's Heavyweight Crew Club 8+: 27th of 35 at Head of the Charles
- Women's Volleyball defeated Middlebury College 3-0
- Football defeated Maritime College 35-28
- Field Hockey lost to Babson College 2-5
- Women's Soccer defeated Worcester Polytechnic Institute 4-0
- Men's Soccer lost to Babson College 0-2
- Men's Water Polo defeated Penn State Behrend 23-3
- Women's Volleyball defeated Tufts University 3-0

Sunday, October 22nd:

- Sailing placed 9th at United States Coast Guard Academy, 9th at Yale University, and 8th at MIT
- Men's Water Polo defeated Johns Hopkins 12-8
- Women's Lightweight LW4: 10th of 11; LW8: 5th of 5 at Head of the Charles
- Men's Lightweight 8+: 9th of 14 at Head of the Charles
- Men's Heavyweight Crew Collegiate 8+: 9th, 24th of 42 at Head of the Charles
- Women's Soccer lost to Colby College 0-4

Tuesday, October 24th:

- Women's Volleyball defeated Clark University 3-0

Wednesday, October 25th:

- Women's Soccer defeated Wellesley College 2-0
- Men's Soccer lost to Worcester Polytechnic Institute 0-2
- Field Hockey defeated Roger Williams University 4-1

Friday, October 27th:

- Men's Swimming and Diving lost to Harvard University
- Women's Swimming and Diving defeated Northeastern 159-138

Saturday, October 28th:

- Men's Heavyweight Crew Collegiate 8+: 2nd; Collegiate 2V8+: 3rd, 11th; Collegiate 4+: 19th at Head of the Fish
- Women's Openweight Crew Collegiate 8+: 1st of 19; Collegiate 2V8+: 1st, 5th, and 20th at Head of the Fish
- Men's Cross Country won the NEWMAC Championship!
- Women's Cross Country won the NEWMAC Championship!
- Rifle defeated Plattsburgh State 4283-3805
- Rifle defeated United States Coast Guard Academy 4283-4187
- Football defeated Norwich University 29-26
- Men's Water Polo lost to Iona University 10-11
- Women's Soccer defeated Emerson College 3-0
- Field Hockey defeated Salve Regina University 8-1
- Men's Water Polo defeated LIU 14-8
- Men's Soccer lost to Wheaton College 2-3

Sunday, October 29th:

- Sailing placed 2nd at Boston University, 3rd at Brown University, 5th at Tufts University, and 7th at MIT
- Rifle defeated Plattsburgh State 4197-3905
- Men's Water Polo lost to Princeton University 11-16

Tuesday, October 31st:

- Field Hockey NEWMAC First Round
- Men's Soccer NEWMAC First Round
- Women's Soccer NEWMAC First Round

MIT net assets drop for the second consecutive year

The endowment fell by 4.4%, from \$24.6 billion to \$23.5 billion

By Russel Ismael and Josh Nix

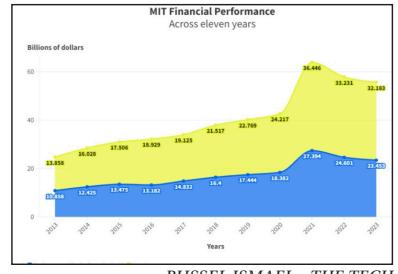
MIT reported a loss in net assets for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. According to the Report of the Treasurer, the Institute's return on pooled investments saw a 2.9% loss in the fiscal year.

The endowment fell by 4.4%, or about \$1.1 billion, from \$24.6 billion in 2022 to \$23.5 billion. The endowment is the largest component of MIT's overall investments and excludes pledges.

Executive Vice President and Treasurer Glen Shor attributed the endowment drop to the underperformance of venture capital firms, stating that "retrenchment in the valuations of venture capital portfolio companies affected [our] performance." Shor acknowledged that MIT's strategy "is heavily weighted toward less efficient markets."

In the pool of peer institutions, MIT was among the few that experienced a dip in endowment value in the past fiscal year. Shor said that MIT's investment policy "favors equity investments over fixed-income investments" in the report. Harvard "increased its allocation to fixed-income securities" according to the university's financial report for the fiscal year 2022.

According to the same report, Harvard had investment returns of



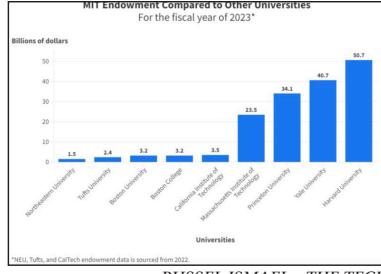
MIT assets and endowment values over the past 11 years.

2.9%. Stanford and Yale reported investment returns 4.4% and 1.8%, respectively.

MIT ended the fiscal year with a net gain of \$317.1 million. Shor acknowledged that despite a challenging fiscal year, MIT experienced great success from philanthropic efforts, raising \$553.3 million. Shor credited the success to "fiscal discipline and investment acumen, as well as support from alumni, friends, and partners."

Shor also shared that operating costs increased by 8.6% — \$344.9 million — from \$3.993 billion in 2022 to \$4.338 billion. These expenses include worker salaries and benefits, supplies, utilities, rent, and maintenance repairs. \$44.1 million went towards expenses at the Lincoln Laboratory in Lexington, Massachusetts.

The financial report noted that



MIT's endowment value compared with other universities.

the Institute holds its students in high esteem, as students bring "knowledge to the world and [advance] research and innovation."

MIT will continue to provide tuition to undergraduates whose families have less than \$140,000 in household income for the 2024 fiscal year.

Furthermore, graduate students will receive 676 new beds for the Graduate Junction residential area, satisfying the promise made in 2017 of having 950 beds for graduate student housing. Additionally, the Institute spent \$450 million on construction-related projects, with MIT working to maintain current buildings.

Shor concluded his report by saying that the Institute begins fiscal 2024 "energized by President Kornbluth's vision and ever-excited about MIT's present and future."

Upcoming Sports Events

SATURDAY 4

7 p.m.

Field Hockey NEWMAC Championship

Men's Soccer NEWMAC Championship

Women's Soccer NEWMAC Championship

Rifle vs Norwich University

8:30 a.m.

Men's Fencing at Smith College

9 a.m.

Women's Fencing at Smith College

9

GUEST COLUMN

Smartphones and Cigarettes Go Hand in Hand

pleasurable but addictive

By Vivian Hir
CAMPUS LIFE EDITOR

The idea of smartphones being the cigarettes of this generation wasn't a foreign concept to me. A few years ago, I read a passage in Cal Newport's (PhD '09) *Digital Minimalism* comparing the goals of big tech companies to those of big tobacco companies. Despite seeing parallels between the two industries, I found the claim to be a bit of a stretch, even as someone very interested in the principles of digital minimalism. I was well aware of the technology's negative effects on society, but using a smartphone appeared much more innocuous than smoking. I realize now that I let the allure of my phone's colorful and bright display deceive me.

It wasn't until a few months ago that I started noticing similarities between my smartphone behavior and smoking; I no longer found Newport's comparison to be an exaggeration. This summer, I found myself bored in the lab quite often. Even though I had experiments and other lab procedures to complete, there was a lot of unscheduled time.

As a result, I decided to check my phone once every one or two hours at work. I prevented myself from breaking this rule by shutting down my phone after I checked each time so I would feel less inclined to pick up the phone. Each time I checked my phone, I made sure not to spend too much time because I was supposed to be focused on lab work and research.

What I described above regarding my phone usage doesn't sound too concerning. A few weeks into being in the lab, however, I started thinking about how my phone breaks were like the smoke breaks people took every hour. The thought of equating the two felt so perverted and disgusting to me. Yet gradually, the thought made more and more sense. The two behaviors seemed different on the surface, yet were similar psychologically. I hated that I had this

frequent urge to check my phone as a way of taking a break. The behavior was rewarding because it distracted me from the unpleasant feelings of boredom and made me relax, similar to how smokers enjoy having smoke breaks. According to the American Cancer Society, what makes smoking enjoyable despite its harmful effects is that nicotine affects brain chemistry by releasing a rush of dopamine as well as adrenaline. These effects last for a few minutes, and the temporary nature of this effect causes people to crave it again. Why couldn't I just resist the urge and only check my phone when I needed to instead of when I wanted to during the workday?

I thought that the growing awareness I had of phone breaks feeling like smoke breaks would force me to end this habit as soon as possible, but it wasn't until a month ago that I finally took action to stop my smartphone habit from becoming more addictive and obsessive. I was annoyed that I had developed a habit of checking my phone much more than I wanted, especially email and messaging apps such as iMessage and Messenger. To add insult to the injury, my recent average screen time was around 30-50% higher than my average in the prior school year.

Logically speaking, I knew that there wasn't much point in checking my phone multiple times for a single new email or text when I could wait a few hours later. Despite this, I felt like my mind was under the control of my smartphone, a technology constantly hijacking my brain's chemical machinery to make it release dopamine whenever I got a new message or email, just like smokers have higher levels of dopamine from inhaling smoke that has nicotine.

Over time, the repetitive behaviors of checking my phone contributed to an obsession, which made it feel like a behavioral addiction. I detested how distracted I was: I couldn't control myself from doing something that was mentally harming me. Instead, I let myself re-

peat the same actions day after day. My smartphone habit seemed just as addictive and hard to quit as smoking.

What motivated me to end this habit was that I became so sick and tired of my obsession with checking my messages and email many times in a single day that I decided one day to limit the daily number of pickups to 10. While I could have used my daily screen time as a metric, I noticed that the average number of pickups would help the most because doing so would also help limit how much time I spent on my phone. My rationale for choosing 10 as the upper limit was that I am typically awake for 16 to 18 hours of the day, so picking up my phone at this frequency for purposes like looking up directions or checking text messages when necessary sounded like a reasonable number.

After adhering to these limits for a few weeks, my screen time and pickups decreased substantially, which made me much happier because I felt like I finally had some agency over my mind. Nowadays, I can focus and concentrate better instead of fragmenting my attention by checking my phone. Of course, more progress must be made, but it is a good start. I must admit that it is uncomfortable to not look at the phone when waiting in line or sitting in the car, but I believe that choosing the harder path is ultimately more satisfying and rewarding than the easier one.

Using smartphones is very different from smoking as one consists of using a handheld device while the other directly causes lung cancer and air pollution, but they are fundamentally not that distinct from a behavioral point of view. As stated previously, both habits drive addiction by affecting the brain's release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that gives us pleasure.

This addictive aspect is why website-blocking apps such as Freedom exist to limit our time on our phones. Ironically, it is by forcing ourselves to have less freedom to do what we want on our devices

that we gain more freedom in the end.

Not only that, both habits help us relax by letting us occupy ourselves with other activities. While it is obvious that smoking harms one's physical health, the fact that smartphones have a detrimental impact on our brain's ability to think can't be ignored. Using a phone often is ordinary, but it is hurting us in so many indirect ways: attention span, productivity, etc. In the long run, our cognitive abilities and mental health decline. Nowadays, we don't even know how to embrace boredom. Boredom is an uncomfortable state to be in, so we turn to our phone as if it is a digital pacifier. Although it is comforting to turn to your phone whenever you're bored, at the end of the day this tendency prevents us from performing deep work.

A less apparent point is that smartphone usage, exactly like smoking, has harmful secondhand effects. One involves polluting the surroundings with harmful chemicals and carcinogens, while the other one is a more subtle form of pollution. The moment someone takes out their phone in a group setting, such as eating a meal with friends, something about the group dynamic and atmosphere changes. When one person looks at their phone, this indirectly influences others to follow suit either out of social awkwardness or boredom, causing the conversation to falter and social interactions to come to a pause. In other words, even the mere presence of a smartphone is distracting.

In conclusion, smartphones are the cigarette of this era. By coming to terms with the fact that the underlying mechanisms of smartphone addiction are related to that of smoking addiction, we can take further steps to end this mental misery that has afflicted us for too long. Because enough is enough.

Vivian Hir is a junior majoring in Computer Science and Molecular Biology. Previously, she wrote an opinion article on The Tech about the negative effects of social media.

GUEST COLUMN

Calls for 'Intifada' Traumatize MIT's Jewish Community

To Jews with connections to Israel, the word "intifada" is associated with suicide bombings, terrorism and the wanton loss of innocent life

By Avi Balsam

The MIT Jewish community huddled together in Hillel, supporting one another, as a swelling crowd loudly called for the extermination of our friends and family. Outside, the crowd was chanting "one solution, intifada revolution," using a term which connotes violent uprising against Jews and thereby implying that the brutal murder of Israeli civilians is anything other than morally abhorrent terror. To say that I felt unsafe would be a gross understatement of the fear and horror I experienced as a group of students from the university which I have chosen to call my home supported violent, indiscriminate attacks against the home of my people.

For those who are not yet aware, a few weeks ago, Hamas, an Iran-backed terror group, murdered over 1,400 Israeli civilians and kidnapped 222 hostages in a single day. This terrorist attack, which targeted women, children, and the elderly, constituted the biggest loss of Jewish life in a single day since the Holocaust. Jewish communities all over the globe are still reeling from the unprecedented scale and brutality of the attacks. Many of us are reminded of the pogroms of Kristallnacht, which were smaller in scale, especially since one of the hostages is an elderly Holocaust survivor. These attacks were not legitimate acts of war, as some on this campus have unfortunately claimed (see dormspam from Oct. 8, subject line: Rally for Palestine TOMORROW: Statement and Call to Action). They were abhorrent acts of "intifada," a word which signifies the slaughter of innocent Jewish civilians.

This is not the first time Jews have heard the word "intifada." Most recent in our memory is the Second Intifada, a series of violent attacks against Israel in which 3,000 Palest-

tinians and 1,000 Israelis lost their lives. Although I was not in Israel during the intifada, many of my friends and family were, and they experienced trauma beyond description. To Jews with connections to Israel, the word "intifada" is associated with suicide bombings, terrorism and the wanton loss of innocent life. As such, when Jewish students at MIT hear calls for "intifada revolution", we cannot interpret them as anything but an active call to violence against the Jewish nation. Words gain meaning from the historical context in which they are used. In this case, the historical context is violence and terrorism in the name of resistance. Claims to the contrary are either misinformed or dishonest.

As a Jew, I have experienced hate because of who I am. During my time at MIT so far, I have been inspired by the university's com-

mitment to combating antisemitism and helping me feel secure in my identity. That sense of belonging came crashing down as I observed the Institute's passivity and complacency in the face of violent speech. I firmly support MIT's deep commitment to fostering free speech on campus. The CAA has the legal and moral right to express their violent opinions, just as neo-Nazis have the right to free assembly. But, in the words of MIT's 18th president, there exists a "clear distinction between what we can say ... and what we should say." When students on campus call for attacks against Jews, MIT's administration has a moral responsibility to state unequivocally that it does not support, and in fact abhors, such violent ideas.

Sadly, MIT has failed to fulfill this responsibility. In the hours after the intifada rally,

President Kornbluth released a lukewarm statement in which she denounced all forms of hate without mentioning the CAA by name or making note of their calls to violence. We call on President Kornbluth to use her presidential voice to directly condemn these calls for violent intifada against Jews.

The sun set, and the voices outside, full of anger and vitriol, continued to chant. Some of my friends took an Uber home, fearful of walking across their own campus. Many more remained, attempting to process the shock, grief, and trauma of the past few weeks. In this dark time, when it felt as if the whole world was turning against us, we somehow found solace in togetherness and community.

Avi Balsam is a sophomore, studying computer science and mathematics. He is a vice president of the MIT Hillel student board.

OPINION POLICY

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Dissents are the signed opinions of editorial board members choosing to publish their disagreement with the editorial.

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SCIENCE NEWS

Drone deliveries leave privacy concerns up in air

A recent MIT Media Lab publication discusses a customer's dilemma: convenience or privacy?

By Russel Ismael

In the future, when you wake up one morning, the chirping birds you hear may very well be replaced by the whirring motors of drones. Drone delivery services may become ubiquitous soon enough as drone operating prices decrease and demand for rapid delivery options increase. But what will they imply for consumer privacy?

A paper from the MIT Media Lab, lead authored by PhD student Alex Berke, stated that drone deliveries introduce a security risk for their customers because of how consumers can be tracked. These privacy risks are a result of safety regulations by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that mandate drones to signal their in-flight locations to the public. This means that any third-party can view the drone's broadcasted location, track its flight patterns, and reason where the drone might end up.

Breaching this privacy could also lead to consequences like more targeted advertisements to problems with personal information.

"[Companies] have control over this data, and when users are opting to use these services, they are basically trusting them to use this data appropriately," Berke explained in an interview with The Tech. "But with [the FAA's] remote ID rule, anyone can set up a sensor network and therefore collect the location information of interest."

Berke's study focused on two types of delivery methods: ground vehicles and flying drones. When given a choice between the two options, Berke's study discovered that people are more inclined to choose ground vehicles because they perceive it to be more privacy-secure.

This then begs the question of what we can do to protect consumer privacy. Berke proposes obfuscating the delivery paths by implementing several stops.

"Alternative routing strategies could be used by the delivery companies to mitigate these privacy risks," Berke explained. In her paper, Berke gives the example of how a drone can stop at multiple stores before stopping at customers' addresses. By adding intermittent stops at different locations, the drone's goals can

be mostly concealed under different delivery orders.

"You can imagine that companies could offer more private routing where that might then be an additional delivery fee or wait time," Berke said. "Those are added costs at the cost of privacy."

Consumers are indeed willing to pay more to protect their privacy, as when faced with the same time and cost to deliver, users were more inclined to choose ground vehicles as opposed to drones without privacy-enhancements.

"What we did show in the paper is that when the privacy-enhancements weren't offered in delivery, there was that difference where people chose the ground vehicle four times more often," Berke stated.

The four times increase corresponds to an 80 percent chance of choosing a ground vehicle over a no-privacy drone. However, this gap narrowed when options for privacy-enhanced drones were available, as the probability of choosing either a ground vehicle or drone became nearly the same.

From Berke's data, consumers were generally more reticent to use anything

that will compromise their privacy. These concerns extend across demographics, as Beck said that "privacy-enhancements have a bigger impact on female consumers," and that "younger consumers care more about privacy-enhancements."

But even so, the best defense against these potential privacy breaches might be to simply see where the drone delivery trend will go. When asked how to balance the right to privacy and the convenience of drone deliveries, Berke answered that "we shouldn't assume drone deliveries will become commonplace."

"Maybe [drone deliveries] will get rejected by the public and not really take off," Berke continued. "Or maybe not enough people will want them, and they just won't be profitable. Who knows what's going to happen."

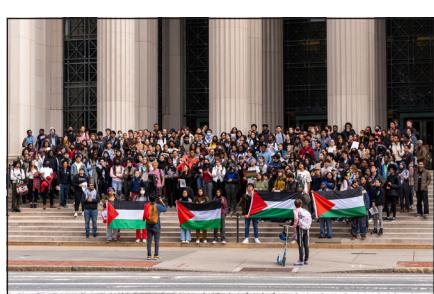
Although such a future may not be a possibility, consumers should still prime themselves to anticipate such changes. As we progress through the digital age, privacy can only become more luxurious and is one of the few commodities we cannot have delivered to our houses, whether it be by drone or ground vehicle.



Hundreds of students and community members gather outside of Stratton Student Center in support of Palestinian victims, Thursday, October 19.



Performers sing Nepali music at MITer's Dashain event in Lobby 13, Saturday, October 21.



Students walk out of classes in protest of the Palestinian-Israel conflict, Monday, October 23.



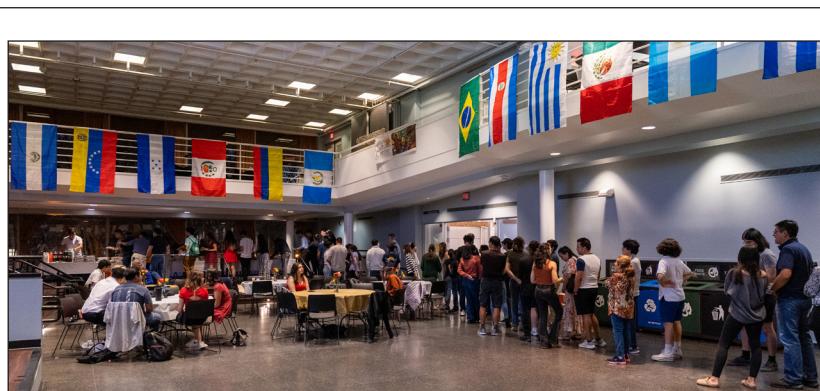
Participants of the die-in hold signs with names and ages of Palestinian victims.



Students browse tables of books at the MIT (Mysterious) Book Exchange event in Hayden courtyard, Friday, October 27.



MIT Concert Choir and MIT Chamber Chorus invite onlookers to sing together at Community Sing, Friday October 27.



MIT students, parents, and families in line for their cena at Latino Cultural Center's Cena a Las Seis event, Saturday, October 28.



Donated items sit free for the taking at the Working Green Committee's Choose to Reuse event, Thursday, October 19.



Students speak with MISTI coordinators and MISTI program ambassadors at the MISTI GO fair, Monday, October 23.



MIT Concert Band performs for Family Weekend, Sunday, October 29.



OMAR OROZCO—THE TECH

Pumpkin explodes at East Campus's annual Pumpkin Drop at Tang Hall, Saturday, October 28.



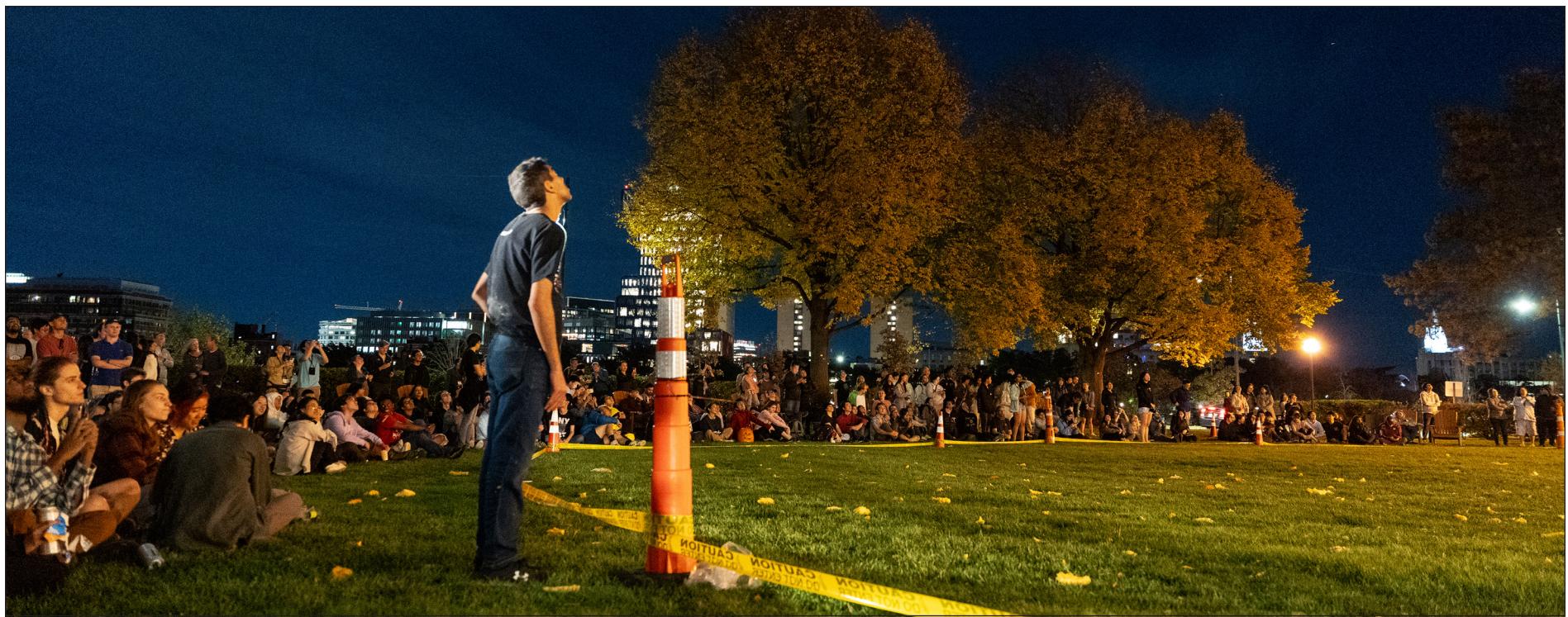
PHOTO COURTESY OF NEXT HAUNT

Players encounter a zombie in Next Haunt's haunted escape room.



Students enjoy ice cream at the annual E

MIT Halloween 2023



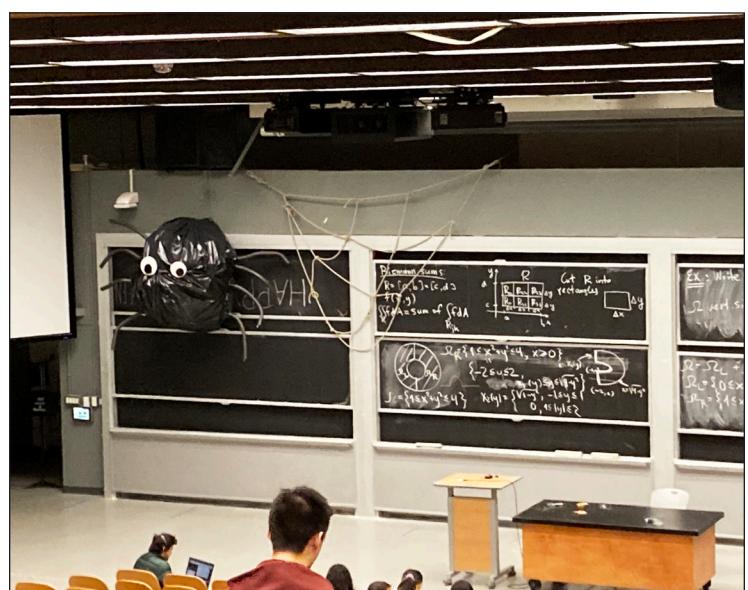
Parents and students watch as 160 pumpkins are dropped off the roof of Tang Hall.

OMAR OROZCO—THE TECH



MIT Video Game Orchestra performs student arrangements of video game music at Activities Midway.

KATE LU—THE TECH



A giant spider lurks in the corner of 26-100 on Halloween.

ALEXA SIMAO—THE TECH



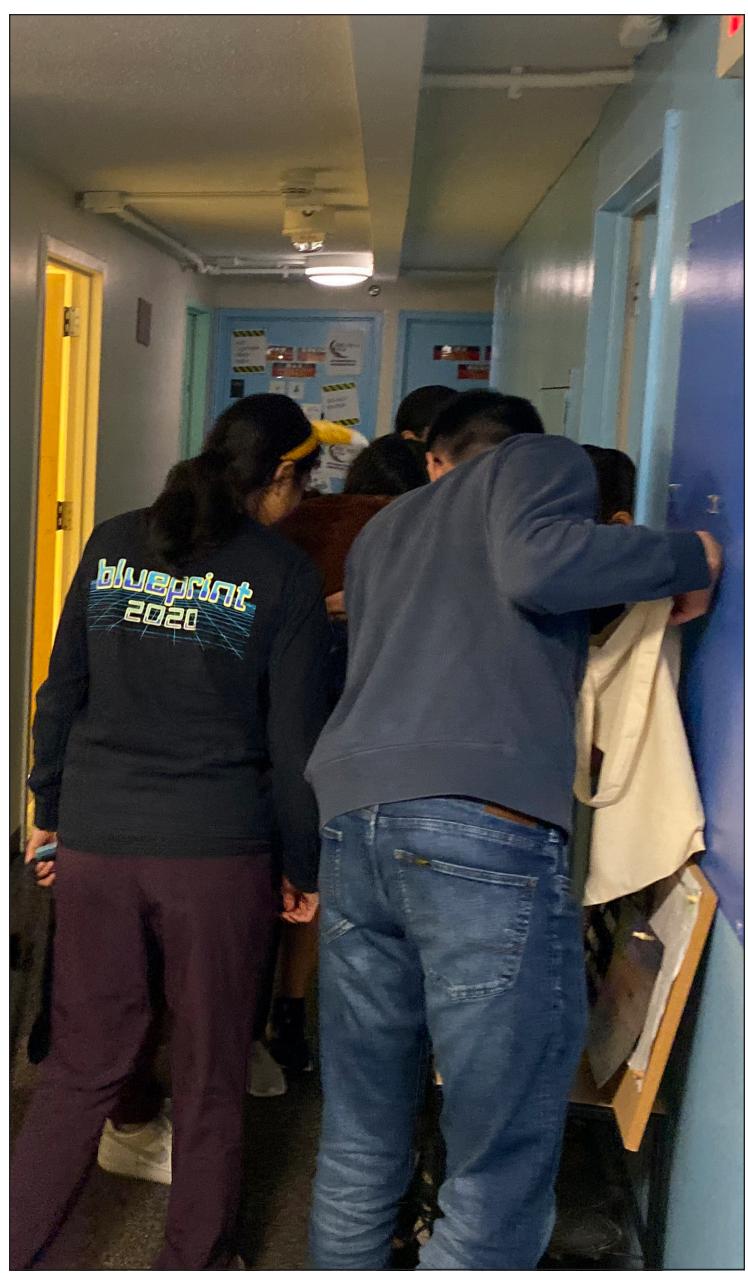
OMAR OROZCO—THE TECH

Last Campus Pumpkin Drop.



KATE LU—THE TECH

One of Next Haunt's puzzles.



Residents of Next House go trick-or-treating on Halloween.

KATE LU—THE TECH

It would be *turtley* awesome if you join **The Tech**



Email us at
join@tech.mit.edu

MOVIE REVIEW

***Brief Tender Light* offers a half-baked reflection on American higher education for international students**

Following four different African students through MIT, covers the documentary basics but spreads the film too thin



By Cameron Davis

As higher education increasingly becomes a prerequisite for jobs, upward mobility, and the “American dream,” it’s no wonder that documentaries about college have proliferated, from 2019’s *Unlikely* to 2021’s *Accepted*. With this summer’s dual Supreme Court decisions in *SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC*, the payoff of a college diploma is more deserving of a critical artistic lens than ever.

critical artistic lens than ever. Arthur Musah's new documentary *Brief Tender Light* attempts to rise to this occasion. The film, which had its Boston premiere at the Arlington International Film Festival last week, will be making its New York premiere at Urban

world Film Festival in November and a national broadcast TV premiere on the PBS series *POV* on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in 2024.

The movie introduces us to four students as they are accepted to MIT in the early 2010s. Like director Musah, who is Ghanaian and received his bachelor's and master's degrees from MIT a decade prior, each of the four is African: Fidelis, from Zimbabwe; Philip, from Nigeria; Billy, from Rwanda; and Sante, the only woman, from Tanzania. Each has been saddled with the hopes, dreams, and mile-high expectations of family and friends in their respective homes, whether to overcome the productivity loss of the Rwandan genocide or to finance the construction of a never-finished school building.

The bulk of the film is a somewhat rote journey through the joys and struggles of college, augmented with the particular trials and tribulations of international, African students. Don't get me wrong — each of the protagonists is great, and it's a pleasure watching them grow up and mature as they face some real difficulties. Philip is bothered when he's the only student in an orientation event to have grown up poor. Sante fails a physics class and questions whether she's meant

Billy, overloaded with student government and his classes, breaks an architectural model late at night. Fidelis, a devout Christian, takes a solo trip to the beach to reflect on feeling more distant from God. They all banter over a meal about classmates' inappropriate reactions to learning they're "from Africa?" Each

comes out the other side stronger, more thoughtful, and more ready to tackle life's challenges; Philip and Sante, the meekest two at the start, have especially rewarding journeys towards self-confidence.

But the way their stories are told feels like going through the documentary motions framed by an unmemorable score and mediocre B-reel shots of campus and Cambridge. In 90 minutes, focusing on four students spreads the plot for each too thin: we aren't able to learn what each student is doing in a given internship or keep up with all through finals week, so while we see them all walk at graduation, we do so without a full appreciation of their individual stories.

preparation of their individual stories. By that same token, Musah sometimes selectively decides to delve into one student's story at a time and the double-clicks can feel confusing or distracting. For instance, after their first year, Philip is selected to teach at a robotics program in Nigeria and Sante lives and works with a mentor in Boston, but we never learn what the other two spend the summers doing.

When Billy goes home to Rwanda, we're treated to a somber, clunky overview of the Rwandan genocide; when Fidelis tries to raise funds for a school in Zimbabwe, there's a noncommittal han-

dling of the principal asking for a bribe. In line with these narrative and structural shortcomings, the most frustrating aspect of the film is Musah's voice-over. *Brief Tender Light* is transparently a vessel through which he is exploring his own journey through school, path into adulthood (from Texas Instrument engineer to USC MFA pedigree), filmmaker.

er), and significant personal guilt over not doing right by his native Ghana. He makes this clear through heavy-handed monologuing interspersed throughout the movie; in one particularly sigh-inducing line, he muses, "If time is a tool, who's wielding it?" Similar reflections on his journey coming out to his family or his struggles at MIT are clearly important to Musah himself, but don't offer much in the way of insightful perspectives to the audience.

A final gripe: Musah and the film's marketing often refer to the "decade-long" documentary, but the only substantive part of the movie takes place during the students' four college years. The rest of the "decade" is told only in intertitles and brief interviews offering short summative professional and personal updates in the last ten minutes of

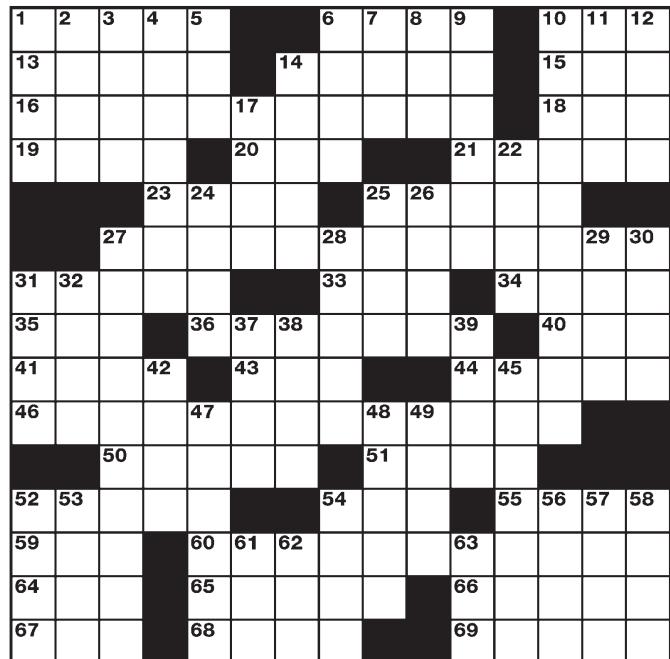
runtime. We lose the relative thoughtfulness and intimacy of the rest of the film, as Musah rushes towards the end and misses the opportunity to delve into the post-college decisions of his protagonists. An intertitle about the end of Robert Mugabe's dictatorship set above the Charles River feels particularly awkward and misplaced alongside updates about the protagonist's life.

As a current MIT student, familiar touchstones were enjoyable: shots of the Infinite Corridor, brass rats adorning the protagonists' fingers. But those small excitements aside, I was left wanting a more thoughtful, in-depth reflection on what makes MIT (or elite education in the US more broadly) great, and where it can and must improve.

Fun **Fun** **Fun** **Fun** **Fun** **Fun**

ABRACADABRA by Guilherme Gilioli

Solution, page 2



ACROSS

- 01 Got up from a chair
06 What socks
 surround
10 "Ready when you
 ___!"
13 Tosses, as dice
14 River mouth shape
15 Payroll deduction
16 Poster maker's pen
18 ___ out a living (just
 manage)
19 Gingery cookie
20 Large coffee
 dispenser
21 Wives or husbands
23 Hostile, as a crowd
25 Hidden supply
27 Word processors'
 typo features
31 Shoreline
33 Gardening tool
34 "Shoo!"
35 Hurry away on foot
36 Very wise
40 Feast ___ famine
41 Quadri- doubled
43 Official prohibition
44 "Don't need
 anything else"
46 Wrist adornment
50 Business magnates
51 ___ and hearty
 (robuts)
52 Casual shirts

DOWN

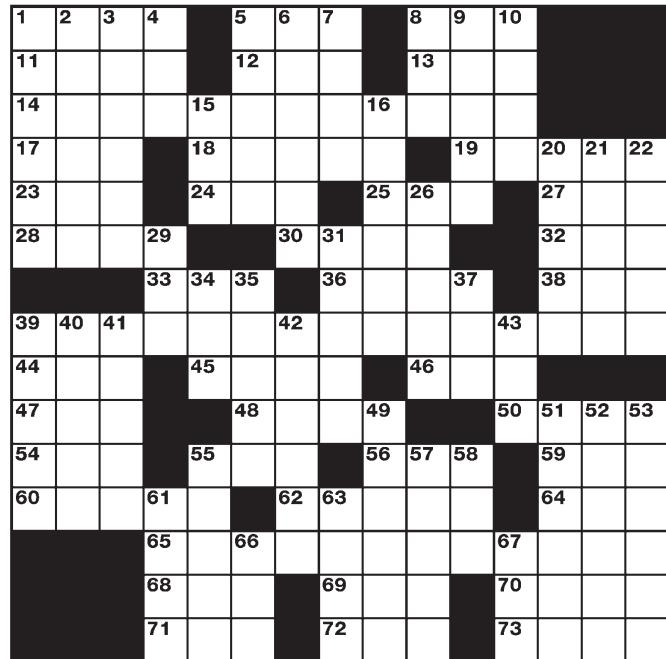
- 01 Sweater's sleeves
02 Reddish-brown
 horse
03 Gymnast Korbut
04 Minor mistakes
05 "Undo" PC key
06 Common office
 plant
07 Animal with antlers
08 Hot season in Paris
09 Airport pavement
10 Absorbed an
 expense
11 Leaf-gathering tool
12 Former partners
13 Actress Hannah or
 rock singer Oates
17 Think (over)
22 Seeks an answer
24 Understands
25 It surrounds a sock
26 Typical high schooler

27 Once-a-year sleigh
driver

- 28 Great Wall locale
 29 Scarcer that scarce
 30 Physician's "Now!"
 31 Gator's cousin
 32 "That smarts!"
 37 Shortened word, for
 short
 38 Golf scorecard
 numbers
 39 Cash drawer
 42 Rice-shaped pasta
 45 One of two *Lion*
 King pals of Simba
 47 Become proficient
 in
 48 Carburetor valve
 in old cars
 49 Where the sun is
 each morning
 52 Where pints cost
 pounds
 53 Scandinavian
 capital
 54 CBS crime
 franchise
 56 Dublin's land
 57 Chew like a rat
 58 Police dept.
 supervisors
 61 Marina Del __, CA
 62 Angry emotion
 63 Coolers in VWs

Key Three by Stanley Newman

Solution, page 2



ACROSS

- ACROSS**

 - 01 Related
 - 05 Major time span
 - 08 Stopping place
 - 11 Detroit River's destination
 - 12 Pastimes, for short
 - 13 Murmuring voice
 - 14 Teachers' keys
 - 17 Cricket gear
 - 18 Disenchanted fan
 - 19 What board includes
 - 23 Had 19 Across
 - 24 Wintry complaint
 - 25 Fret about
 - 27 Kindled
 - 28 Nice guy
 - 30 Hem in
 - 32 Undivided
 - 33 Letters of credit
 - 36 Stats, for instance
 - 38 Be indecisive
 - 39 Instruments with keys
 - 44 Write further
 - 45 Mare fare
 - 46 Street cred
 - 47 Vast quantity
 - 48 Great joy
 - 50 Unvaried
 - 54 Draw off
 - 55 Whistle insert
 - 56 Gray shade
 - 59 McCourt book
 - 60 Rite place

DOWN

- 01 Pouch to dunk
02 Highly decorated
03 Tune in
04 Wet beads
05 It isn't right
06 Vacation spot
07 Longing
08 Water coole
09 Claim of innocence
10 Airplane part
15 Go away slowly
16 Quick task
20 Hawaiian welcome
21 Much hotel laundry
22 Botanical supports
26 Excited about doing
29 Pewter part
31 Run under water
34 Symbolic hugs
35 How words function
37 29 Down source
39 Elbows on the table
40 Best imaginable

Bi-Roads

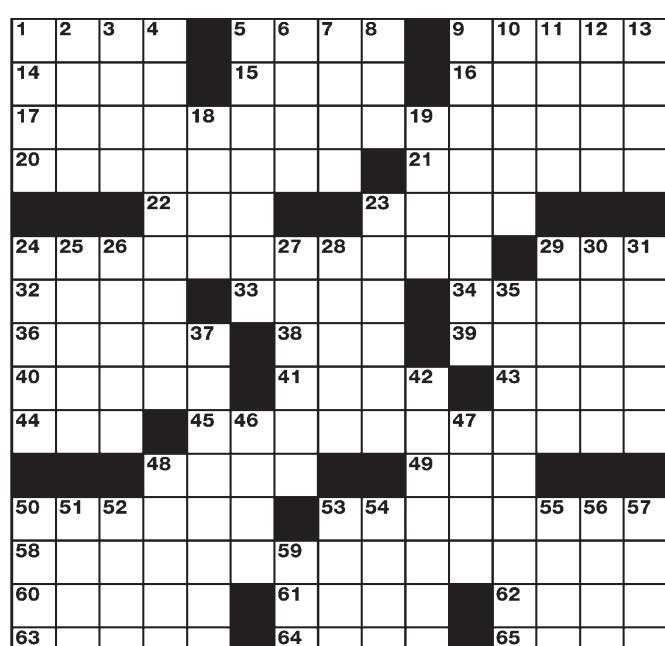
3.1.1 **Root**

Across

- | Across | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 01 Mac (laptop choice) | 40 treasure |
| 05 Commando arms | 41 Another: Sp. |
| 09 In the offing | 43 Parisian possessive |
| 14 Okey follower | 44 ID with dashes |
| 15 Settle in snugly | 45 Aerial Antarctic explorer |
| 16 Mexican silver city | 48 Of the people |
| 17 American Graffiti | 49 Play that introduced "robot" |
| auto | 50 It's not really there |
| 20 Most out of it | 53 Something comparable |
| 21 Stood by | 58 French avant-garde painter |
| 22 NHLs Ducks | 60 Minimal |
| 23 Inclination | 61 Google alternative |
| 24 Ivy's center | |
| 29 Laura Bush | |
| alma mater | |
| 32 Smoothie flavor | |
| 33 Word with stage or storm | |
| 34 Hurricane's origin | |
| 36 Athlete's on-air greeting | |
| 38 Babe in the woods | |
| 39 Mrs. | |
| Down | |
| 01 Web manuals, often | |
| 02 Condo kin | |
| 03 Southern fried fare | |
| 04 Salmon product | |
| 05 Not listened to | |
| 06 Helen's father | |
| 07 Fails to be | |

Down

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 01 Web manuals, often | 31 Reversed |
| 02 Condo kin | 35 Seafood served with cole
slaw |
| 03 Southern fried fare | 37 Disparage |
| 04 Salmon product | 42 Accuse formally |
| 05 Not listened to | 46 A.J. Soprano portrayer |
| 06 Helen's father | 47 Mind-numbing |
| 07 Fails to be | |



- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 48 Goethe play | ecclesiastical attire |
| 50 Amalgam | 55 Show astonishment |
| 51 Cranial concoction | 56 Inner incentive |
| 52 Speckled steed | 57 Dutch export |
| 53 Airport counter tenant | 59 Corporate AKA |
| 54 With 10 Down | |

Debate: Is STEM Systemically Racist?

Co-Presented by the Adam Smith Society and
MIT Free Speech Alliance



Moderated by Nadine Strossen

Past President, American Civil Liberties Union

Tonight!
8:00 p.m.
Wong Auditorium
(E51-115)

*Free Admission (Scan QR for
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*Refreshments Served in Lobby
Starting at 7:00 p.m.*



Featuring:

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- Jaret Riddick, Senior Fellow, Center for Security and Emerging Technology, Georgetown University
- Luana Maroja, Professor of Biology, Williams College
- Erec Smith, Associate Professor of Rhetoric, York College of Pennsylvania and President/Co-Founder, Free Black Thought

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